

## **COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**October 10, 2006**

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, October 10, 2006 at 10:10 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Present** Thomas Owen, Rabbi Elan Adler, JoAnn Fisher and Norman Gelman.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES** Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that they should discard the set of minutes that were mailed to them and that the set received today is the official set of minutes. The minutes of the September meeting were accepted as written.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT** Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached). Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that he wrote a couple of letters regarding the request for two (2) new attorneys and for the over-the mark budget. One letter was sent to Secretary Januszkiewicz and one to Delegate Talmadge Branch, lead sponsor on the Commercial Non-Discrimination bill. Chairperson Owen also informed Commissioners that he received a response from Secretary Januszkiewicz but did not hear anything from Delegate Branch.

The General Counsel suggested sending a letter to Senator Verna Jones, Chairperson of the Legislative Black Caucus.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT** Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director's Report (See attached). The Executive Director informed Commissioners that MCHR requested, from Budget and Management, two (2) attorney positions to help MCHR enforce the Commercial Non-Discrimination Act, a bill that passed last session. MCHR was given one attorney position this fiscal year.

Fiscal Year 2007 Budget  
Fiscal Year 2008 Budget  
The Executive Director informed Commissioners that MCHR has also included the attorney position it received in Fiscal Year 2007 in its Fiscal Year 2008 over-the-mark request, along with more positions. The request has not yet been considered. The request is in the process of being evaluated by the Budget Analyst.

MCHR should know by the next Commission meeting what the budget for fiscal year 2008 will be. MCHR is also requesting that the state provide additional general funds to make up for the decrease in federal funds.

Commissioners  
Training

The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the Maryland Association of Human Rights Agencies and the Maryland Chapter of the National Association of Human Rights Workers conducted the Commissioners training workshop, which was well attended. The agenda of the training was geared more toward new Commissioners.

Commercial Non-  
Discrimination Bill –  
Senate Bill 897

Chairperson Owen inquired as to how MCHR would market the Non-Discrimination Bill. The General Counsel informed Commissioners that MCHR does not have the start up staff at the moment. MCHR has to first amend the statute; as written it creates confusion and problems. The General Counsel has already met with the bill drafter and has reviewed the entire bill. The General Counsel recommended amendments to the bill and the bill drafter will prepare a draft of the recommendations. The General Counsel needs to meet with Baltimore City, who has a similar bill, and some of the members of the committee that put this legislation together, to get a sense of what the intent was, and also explain who MCHR is and what MCHR's situation is. The General Counsel also stated that amendments to the regulations need to be drafted so that there is a procedural system in place for MCHR to take these complaints and process them. Once the structure and foundation is established, MCHR can look at marketing the bill.

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that MCHR could market this legislation on the agency's website. The IT Manager also suggested that MCHR market the legislation on a separate website.

Commissioner Gelman would like a list of the Chairpersons of appropriate committees to send letters regarding supporting MCHR's budget request.

**DEPUTY  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT  
Case Processing**

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that September 30th marks the end of the federal fiscal year. MCHR has completed all work that it was contracted for with EEOC and HUD.

**ASSISTANT  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the agency's Monthly Budget Status Report (See attached). The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that MCHR's current budget year is proceeding on target.

The budget hearing will be held on Monday, November 20, 2006. The hearing will only be held if MCHR does not agree with the Budget Analyst's recommendations.

**GENERAL  
COUNSEL'S  
REPORT**

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached). The General Counsel introduced Terrence Artis, new attorney and Tanyka Barber, new Law Clerk. The two new employees were welcomed by Commissioners.

Information  
Technology Unit  
Annual Report

Commissioners received copies of the draft Annual Report in the mail. The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that the Deputy Director has assigned an Investigator, Bonnie Hernandez, to shepherd the Annual Report. Department Heads made submissions to the Investigator who put the report together.

Commissioner Gelman suggested that a paragraph be added in the Letter of Transmittal in reference to MCHR's present funding and staffing problems. Commissioner Gelman suggested several changes to the Annual Report.

Rabbi Adler inquired as to who reads the Annual Report. Rabbi Adler suggested that a media event to hand deliver Annual Reports be held. Rabbi Adler also suggested that a copy of the Annual Report be mailed to the Baltimore Board of Rabbis. The Executive Director responded that MCHR would mail the Annual Report to the Board of Rabbis.

The Information Technology Manager informed Commissioners that the Annual Report will be going to the printer in December 2006.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Hispanic Study

Chairperson Owen informed Commissioner that the Hispanic Study project is at a standstill because of the lack of funding.

Hate Crimes

The General Counsel informed Commissioners that she, along with MCHR's Training Specialist and HUD, are working together on scheduling an event in Charles and Prince George counties in reference to hate crimes in housing.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m.

Barbara Wilson